

C O N C O R D I A U N I V E R S I T Y

SENATE RESEARCH COMMITTEE

M I N U T E S

(of SRC meeting held on Thursday, February 15, 1990,
at 10:00 a.m., in Room BC-110, SGW campus)

ATTENDANCE -

Members present: J.N. Lightstone (Chair), P. Albert,
B. MacKay, J. Segovia, M.N.S. Swamy,
D. Gold, K. Lipke, S. Sankar,
E. Doedel, M. Lefebvre, A. Williams,
V.V. Baba, G. Mergen,
N. Plant (Secretary)

Absent with regrets: C. Apostostolakos, U. de Brentani,
D. Ginter

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED AND DISTRIBUTED TO SENATE RESEARCH COMMITTEE
in advance:

SRC-90-02-15-D86 MEASURES TO PROMOTE RESEARCH, CONTRIBUTIONS TO SCHOLARSHIP AND CREATIVE ACTIVITY AND PROMOTING RESEARCH AND ASSESSING PRODUCTIVITY IN HUMANITIES, ARTS & SOCIAL SCIENCES (By Dr. D. Gold)

SRC-90-02-15-D87 DEC-CONCORDIA RESEARCH INITIATIVES PROGRAM

SRC-90-02-15-D88 RESEARCH IN CANADIAN UNIVERSITIES; RESPONSES TO THE ROYAL SOCIETY'S QUESTIONS FROM CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY (Office of the Vice-Rector, Academic 2.11.90)

SRC-90-02-15-D89 A "HUMAN SUPPORT SYSTEM" TO IMPLEMENT AND OPERATE THE FACULTY RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (By Dr. J. Segovia)

Dr. Jack N. Lightstone occupied the Chair.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 10:05 a.m..

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

1.1 The agenda was approved by the Committee.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

2.1 As there were no corrections or additions to the minutes of the last meeting; they were approved.

BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

3.1 No business resulted from the last meeting.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

4.1 DEC - Digital Equipment of Canada

The Chair announced that the DEC-Concordia agreement consists of three parts:

- A. An agreement to purchase DEC Equipment at preferred rates, i.e. VAX, microcomputers, MS DOS compatible machines, etc.
- B. Free access to any of DEC's software
- C. A Research Initiatives Program, as per Document SRC-90-02-15-87.

The Chair noted that if a major piece of equipment is bought rather than a buy-one get-one free policy, DEC will sell Concordia the piece of equipment at 50% of the preferred Concordia rate.

Several members of the Senate Research Committee expressed concern with regards to the benefits to DEC. They felt that there were no guidelines as to how applicants should respond to this query.

The Chair stated that DEC was quite open as to the areas in which they would support projects. Benefits to DEC could be in the commercial sense of applications software development or in increased publicity due to graduate students using their equipment or other high profile uses.

The Chair noted that DEC had committed \$250,000 per year for this program with Concordia. Due to tax benefits this amount

will have to be spent by December before June 30, 1990.

S. Sankar stated that the potential benefits to DEC should be more explicate. V. Baba added that a few examples of possible benefits could help to clarify the situation. P. Albert disagreed stating that the most creative programs will win out. Dr. Sankar was still not satisfied.

The Chair reassured the Committee that the penultimate decision will be made at Concordia's adjudication Committee. A member of DEC will be sitting on this committee. The Chair closed the discussion regarding this matter. If researchers applying to the program required further information or guidelines they could contact Audrey J. Williams.

Visit from SSHRC

4.2 Louise Dondoraud, the Acting-Director of SSHRC, visited Concordia on Wednesday, February 7th. She outlined the basic recommendations of the Courtney and Paquet reports regarding the changes in policy which would be implemented in the new year.

SSHRC Grant Workshop

4.3 On February 14th an SSHRC Grant Workshop was held. D. Gold, V. Baba and Sister Prudence Allen discussed the essentials required to write a good grant proposal. The total number of researchers who participated in the workshop was eight which was quite disappointing. The Chair suggested that group meetings for researchers with similar interests might be preferable to large general meetings.

Dean Swamy noted that with the change in policies it might be beneficial to the Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science to find out more about the programs which would be available to particular members of his faculty. He sighted the examples of Dr. Goldsmith and Dr. Okada who are eligible/or already receiving SSHRC grants. The Chair stated that he will send the relevant information to Dean Swamy.

NSERC Grant Workshop

4.4 V. Baba suggested that it would be beneficial to conduct a meeting with the aid of some NSERC recipients to find out their granting strategies.

The Chair announced that an open forum would be held to discuss the changes in policy. He noted that the Strategic program had been revised. A.. Williams suggested that the meeting should take place when C. Langford was at Concordia since he was a member of the Strategic Grants Committee.

Budget Process and the FRDP

4.5 The Chair regretted that he had no further announcements regarding this issue. A decision will not be made before the middle of March when the 1990-91 budget will be announced. The Chair was reassured that the FRD will be given high priority.

Accessibility to Research Support Facilities

4.6 The Chair suggested that a policy should be drafted on the accessibility of research services. He has received queries which ranged from the paying for library searches to the inability to get time on facilities.

One of the major problems experienced by all researchers has been the issue of telephones for graduate students. The Chair estimates that the maximum cost to the university would not exceed \$50,000.

Dean Swamy announced that this was not the first time that this issue had been addressed in the SRC meeting. Approximately two years ago Dr. White had announced to the Deans that if they required telephones for their research assistants then they should be ordered. However, the Vice-Rector of Services, cancelled this policy and put Joey Rollens to the task of studying it. The result was an exorbitant estimate. Dean Swamy noted that he had offered to pay for the costs out of his budget but the request had been denied.

The Chair stated that in principal telephones should be in the same budget category as space, heating and lighting and that this issue would be covered in the policy draft.

5.1 At the previous SRC meeting the Chair had asked Dr. Gold to draft a document regarding the benchmarks for assessing productivity in the humanities, arts and social sciences (Document SRC-90-02-14-D86).

In synopsis Dr. Gold stated that there is a resistance to put research as a high priority item at Concordia. She stressed that RSCA (Research, Scholarship, Creative Activity and Assessing/Promoting research productivity) should be emphasized in the arts and science.

In Item 3 of her report, D. Gold suggested that a competition should be held, on a one-shot basis without regard to the prior track record of the participants. In this way new or inexperienced researchers would have the possibility of obtaining funding.

Another item that Dr. Gold stressed in her plan (Item 2, Page 4) was the importance of team research. She felt that alleviated the individual researchers frustrations in not receiving grants.

The Chair complimented D. Gold on her document stating that concrete proposals and strategies could result from it.

With regards to Item 2 on Page 1, it was suggested that the Thursday Report could be a vehicle through which air time could be offered to various departments.

D. Gold stated that the feasibility of some of her propositions relied heavily on the availability of funding.

J. Segovia queried the need for such tasks as outlined in the document. He felt that performing research was a fundamental part of faculty members' contracts, and if they were not performing this function then they were not living up to their responsibilities or pulling their weight.

P. Albert stated that only in the last 10 - 15 years had research been a very high priority at Concordia. Although the new recruits into the faculty see this element as a fundamental part of their job, many older professors do not.

D. Gold stated that part of the problem lies with the perceptions regarding research. To many professors researchers are arrogant and insecure and are taking time away from teaching.

P. Albert stated that people must be convinced that there is value in research. He stated that many professors are beyond the point of understanding this. It is up to the university to motivate the younger faculty members.

V. Baba stated that one of the problems which D. Gold's report illustrated is that the university community must be socialized regarding research. Not only is financial support required, but also moral and social support.

At this point the Chair asked that the Committee discuss J. Segovia's report (Document No. SRC-90-02-15-D89) as well.

Document from J. Segovia/Document from D. Gold

6.1 In synopsis J. Segovia stressed that the development of an FRDP program would increase the bureaucratic process. He noted that the central administration of this program could not be in the hands of both researchers and administrators at the same time due to a conflict of interest.

Dr. Gold asked for a clarification of the "Con's of H.S.S." (Page 2) regarding the "potential detriment to teaching". Did this imply that researchers cannot teach or that their research and contract would take them away from their teaching responsibilities?

Dr. Lightstone stated that while some faculty members feel that teaching only is an appropriate work load, promotion in the present day is based almost exclusively on research activities.

Dean Swamy noted that this problem does not exist in his faculty. Both old and new faculty members are socialized to the fact that research is fundamental to their positions. Dean Swamy stressed that in his department the dollars and cents figures were a good measure of productivity. He stressed that the average grant obtained from peers (at other institutions) within an area of study could be an accurate source of measurement of productivity for all faculties. He noted that this could be potentially difficult in some areas, however, the activities of peers were still the best comparison tool.

Dr. Lightstone reiterated that from the discussion, one of the major problems appeared to be how do we socialize people into career profiles - how do we help them conduct initial research?

Dean Swamy suggested that a socialization process will not be possible until the university decides that research is an integral component to this institution.

S. Sankar suggested that comparisons with other universities, as guidelines, could be quite beneficial to some departments. The Chair stressed that faculties should come up with their own strategy documents if need be. Dean Swamy stated that D. Gold's Item 2 (Page 2) should be stressed - Research is fundamental to university life.

The issue of socialization was discussed for several minutes. It was decided by the Committee that this item should be further studied leaving out the element of financial support. What can be done with the resources that the committee presently possesses?

Using D. Gold's report, the Chair delegated responsibilities to Committee members. P. Albert is to prepare a report regarding the strategies for socialization. Dean Swamy is to analyze the issue of support services (Item 5, Page 3). V. Baba is to suggest methods of public relations in order to create an active research image at Concordia.

D. Gold delegated the responsibility of Item 2, Page 2 to the Chair. J. Lightstone suggested that if need be he would visit the individual Faculty Councils in order to get across this message.

Study of University Research by the Royal Society of Canada
Response from Concordia University

7.1 V. Baba requested that full documentation from the Royal Society regarding their study of research be distributed to the SRC Committee. The Chair agreed.

The Committee agreed with the Chair that Concordia's initial response should be sent to Senate for the information of senators.

Varia

8.1 Due to the length of the meeting it was agreed that A.J. Williams report on activities would be postponed until the next meeting.

CLOSING REMARKS

9.1 The Chair asked the other Committee members if they would be available at another time during the week so as to allow U. de Brentani to attend the meetings. No other time could be arranged therefore the meetings time will remain Thursday mornings. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 22nd at 10:00 a.m. In Room BC-110.

The meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m.